

Girton Tennis Club AGM (19th March 2024)

1. Members present

Andy Luff, Alan Franklin, Mark Lawton, John Irwin, Victor Travieso, Matthew Boucher, Bruce Parker, James Page, Bob Killick.

Apologies: Alan Richardson, Lotte Skjodt, Toby Jackson

2. 2023 Minutes & Matters Arising:

AL stated that Barclays have written to confirm that JP should also now have access to the club bank account. JP has not received details yet but access would make membership renewal much easier to manage. The minutes were accepted.

3. Chairman's report

John congratulated the committee for their outstanding work in keeping our friendly and inclusive club running so well. Although stepping down as Chairman and committee member, John said it has been a privilege and pleasure to lead the committee. John highlighted junior participation and coaching as particular club strengths.

On behalf of all the committee, AL thanked John for his wise and calm leadership which had helped us navigate through many issues and changes – particularly those required during Covid lockdown years.

4. Treasurer's report

AL gave a thorough description of the club accounts and these were accepted.

The club's finances are stable and there was an operating surplus last year thanks to more membership income and higher interest rates. Court rental paid to the PC was £2,571 and this will increase by 7% during 2024. The Rocket Cup competition costs were discussed as the accounts included the initial purchase of the Cups. These will be engraved with future winner names, so the ongoing running costs will be much lower.

It was agreed that we would donate £350 to the PC in recognition of our use of the MUGA on Friday evenings (April to Oct). AL will write to confirm dates and times required for this year and arrange payment of the donation for last year.

AL highlighted the increasing difficulty in accessing bank services (call centre delays, branch closures etc) and asked that we encourage all members to stop using cash for club transactions. JI thanked AL for his clear and effective management of our accounts.

5. Membership report

JP provided a detailed report of membership in 2023.

Last season we had 185 members as compared to 177 the previous year. Of the 185 members, 99 are adults, 86 juniors and the split between male/female is roughly equal.

The slight increase in numbers was considered to down to the continued success of our junior supervised sessions and also the provision of coaching, which has encouraged a few Cottenham based players to join our club.

It was noted that our Friday night club nights had not been very popular over the Winter but that this may have been mainly due to the weather.

It was agreed that fees for members would be kept at the 2023 rates. These are:

Single £68

Junior £30

Family £136

In addition, it was agreed that we will offer a discount to those paying their fees before the end of April 2024 to encourage membership interest. The discount will be approximately 15% but rounded to whole pounds. The discounted rates are:

Single £58

Junior £25

Family £116

AF will put a new membership note in the April GPN publication. JP will email the current membership with details of arrangements for membership renewal. VT will include details on our website.

6. Captain's report

ML handed out a detailed summary of how our mixed and men's teams fared in the Summer and Winter Leagues. Some of the highlights included matches where a few of our Junior member's joined the teams, with excellent results, and a few matches where we managed 8-0 wins. The Winter league had been more challenging, due to the weather and cancellations, but thanks go to the many members that have played in our matches. ML thanked BP for keeping everything running whilst he was away and confirmed that, after 10 years in this role, he is pleased that BP will become Captain and organise the teams in future. JI thanked ML for running our teams so successfully over the last decade.

We have entered a Mixed and Men's team for this Summer League and the Men's schedule is now available with 7 games to play and 4 home matches (all on Tuesdays).

ML said that our home matches benefit significantly from the facilities that we can offer including the court quality and post-match entertainment at the George.

7. Appointment of Officers

The following were proposed, seconded and accepted:

Alan Franklin – Secretary

James Page – Membership Secretary

Andy Luff – Treasurer

James Page – Welfare Officer

Committee Members: Alan Richardson, Mark Lawton, Victor Travieso, Bruce Parker, Mathew Boucher, James Page, Andy Luff, Alan Franklin.

Captains: Men's Team – Bruce Parker

Mixed Team – Bruce Parker

Deputy: vacant

Deputy: vacant

AF to check if Lotte will continue to be on our committee. It was noted that we need to continue to encourage a more diverse committee membership.

8. Rocket Cup

This competition, setup in memory of Kevin Keeves, ran for the second time between June and July 2023. It included both a singles and doubles competition. VT explained that 36 members had played in a total of 50 matches – some even attracting spectators! Our younger members did particularly well and won both junior and adult singles categories, and then the doubles.

JI congratulated VT on the great success of this competition. It will run again in 2024 soon after the Summer school term finishes. Toby Jackson (coach) has said he would like to run a competition for families this year. We agreed this was an interesting idea and would be supported by the committee. VT to liaise with Toby.

9. Junior Supervised Sessions

These ran from mid April to November 2023 and were very popular, attracting 20-25 per session. VT said he had had more helpers and that some of our younger players had run and managed group activities. The 2024 season will start on Friday 19th April.

JI said that encouraging and developing young player skills personified all that the club stands for and we are very grateful for the hard work that VT, AR and all our helpers put into this key activity.

The option to support one of our younger players to go through the LTA 'Level 1 Assistant Coaching' course was discussed. This costs £285 and the next course is in April. The potential candidate is now over 16 and may have the time to attend. It was agreed that this should be supported. VT will liaise with the candidate.

10. Equipment

AF read out the report from AR. The issue of managing and issuing keys would be solved by using combination padlocks. RK suggested that they should be on chains, to prevent too many being lost, and that we should have at least one spare. It was noted that the box to control the court lights would also need to have a similar combination lock. JP said he could update the membership with new combination numbers by email whenever a change is needed. The Parish Clerk (Yvonne Murray) said that she didn't think this would cause any problems as long as the PC and other groups using the courts (eg basketball) have the necessary code. It was agreed that AR should proceed with this upgrade.

Ball types were discussed and it was agreed that we should purchase more pressure less balls for club night use. For match practice, it is important to use the same type that will be used in the matches so clear separation and labelling is required so they don't get mixed up.

JP reported that other members had raised the idea of wind breaks around the courts, a bench on the court and a curved practice wall. These were discussed and space limitations were the main reason for not proceeding with a bench or practice wall at the moment. It was agreed that AR should get quotations for the supply and fitting of suitable wind breaks around the court.

AF stated that the ball machine is fully operational. JP said some members had enquired about using it. It was agreed that any new users would have to borrow the club room key to gain access and also have some introductory training about how to use it safely.

11. Parish Council

JI welcomed Councillor Stuart Marshall and Parish Clerk Yvonne Murray to our AGM. They outlined the changes that had been envisaged for the Pavilion and how these were subsequently halted. A budget of around £250k remains but final decisions about how this will be spent is pending. The idea of having a café was discussed and widely supported by our meeting as long as the ambience and food/drink quality matches our high expectations (eg similar to Stir in Histon).

A number of changes are taking place to improve the management and maintenance of PC assets and to also make it easier for residents to log issues and see what is being done. (Pot holes were mentioned but these are not a direct PC responsibility). Wilby and Burnett have been appointed as a Master Planner for the PC and the bowls club toilets and clubroom is the current major project. A Parish Ranger (Kevin Jacobs) will be sorting out a number of maintenance issues around the village eg play equipment.

Yvonne said that the PC are hoping to get a Gold award in the Local Council award scheme as this would enable the PC to act as a business. Stuart said that this might open the door to a number of ways to gain income and therefore reduce the need for resident precept increases.

Both Stuart and Yvonne are keen to improve engagement between the PC and community and said that the PC is aiming to be more transparent in their policies, processes and finances. Stuart highlighted the need to collect good data to help develop future plans. The community hall in St Vincent's Close was mentioned as support from South Cambs District Council may decrease.

AR will continue to be our member on the PC working groups with AF as deputy. The desire to have a clean walking surface between the Pavilion and tennis courts was noted. The PC were congratulated on the new table tennis tables and we agreed to ask AR to purchase a set of suitable balls and paddles (bats to some readers!) for safe keeping in our club room.

VT thanked the PC for getting the dog poo bins moved away from the tennis courts.

ML asked the PC about a paddle tennis court. This might be considered if there was sufficient interest to support the investment.

12. Coaching

Toby Jackson started his coaching activities at our club in January and, despite the weather, has already built up a reasonable amount of interest and is very happy to continue. He has enlisted a few of our best younger players to help with group training sessions so they gain experience (and a bit of pocket money).

Toby emailed a report for the AGM that shows that 25 juniors and 20 adults have been taking part in the group or individual training sessions. AL and JP have taken part and gave positive reports.

ML asked if coaching will continue on Wed evenings as this had been a team practice night. VT said this is quite likely and that team practice could be on Tues evenings when there are no matches. VT said bookings for Summer coaching open from March 20th. These may be very popular so early booking is advised.

13. AOB

BP proposed another Xmas meal in December. ML will book a date with the golf club and it was agreed that all members should be invited.

VT asked about Wimbledon tickets as the club no longer gets any visibility of how many of our members secure tickets. It was agreed we should encourage those members going to Wimbledon to put something in our monthly GPN article as this is now a hidden benefit of club membership. AL has tickets this year and will write something suitable.

AF asked for committee support for the Girton Feast on Fri 12th and Sat 13th July. The Sat Open afternoon and general help with setup etc was noted.

14. Next Meetings

No dates were set although the 2025 AGM is likely to be in early March.
This meeting closed at 20.55

A committee meeting followed the AGM and Alan Richardson was unanimously elected as Club Chairman.